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ABSTRACT

The document was developed to help districts in the planning and carrying out of successful programs for disadvantaged pupils. It provides a rationale for curriculum development as it relates to the disadvantaged, directed to administrators, curriculum workers, and teachers. The three compensatory education priorities are reading, mathematics, and bilingual education. Some promising developments in the field are smaller class sizes, use of teacher assistants, new organizational patterns, team teaching, and new equipment and materials. Teacher attitudes, the value and methods of planning, applying psychological insights, utilization of community resources, and participation are discussed. (MS)

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GUIDELINES IN TEACHING THE DISADVANTAGED

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

The University of the State of New York
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Division of Education for the Disadvantaged
(Title I ESEA) and
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The University of the State of New York/The State Education Department
Division of Education for the Disadvantaged [Title I, ESEA] and
Division of School Supervision/Albany, 1973

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FOREWORD

This statement was developed to help districts in the planning and carrying out of successful programs for disadvantaged pupils. Over the years since the inception of Title I programs, there has developed a "know how" on the part of many working with disadvantaged pupils which the Department feels all districts might wish to share. If the publication helps schools to plan programs more wisely, to avoid errors made in earlier programs, and to serve the disadvantaged better, it will have achieved its purpose.

In its present form the statement provides a rationale for curriculum development as it relates to the disadvantaged. Basically, the material is directed to administrators, curriculum workers, and teachers. It is hoped that the statement establishes some common perspectives and criteria that will help to improve the program for the total spectrum of the disadvantaged.

The first draft of this paper and subsequent revisions were written by Hillis Idleman, associate in secondary curriculum. Mr. Idleman conducted the study in all of its phases and is coordinating curriculum projects for the disadvantaged in the Bureau of Secondary Curriculum Development.

Appreciation is expressed to all those who reviewed the first draft and who contributed to its refinement, and particularly to Aaron Buchman, associate, Bureau of Mathematics Education, Carlos Perez, supervisor, Bilingual Education Unit, Mrs. Jane Algozzine, chief, Bureau of Reading Education, and Donald E. White, associate in education for the disadvantaged.

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BACKGROUND

Who are the disadvantaged?

There are many definitions of those termed "culturally deprived," "educationally deprived," "culturally different," "disadvantaged," etc. However, for the purposes of this paper, the following definition will be used: *Who is an educationally deprived child? "Educationally deprived children" means those children who have need for special educational assistance in order that their level of educational attainment may be raised to that appropriate for children of their age. The term includes children who are handicapped or whose needs for such special educational assistance result from poverty, neglect, delinquency, or cultural or linguistic isolation from the community at large.*

The deprived may be of any ethnic group. The American Indian whose horizons have been circumscribed, the Mexican-American, the black child, the Puerto Rican, the child of the migrant or seasonal worker, or the white child in an area which has kept itself isolated from the mainstream of American culture--all these make up the disadvantaged.

Understanding the nature of the disadvantaged

As social, economic, and technological changes develop with the speed of geometric progression, controversy sweeps the school front. School personnel and the public debate the question of how best to educate the increasing numbers of pupils from economically and culturally deprived homes. No longer is it suggested that such pupils be excluded as they arrive at the legal age for leaving school. The clamor for equal opportunity, the shortage of manpower -- to say nothing of the inherent right to education of the individual in a democracy--all these dictate that schools must find a way to tap the potential that lies in these students. However, many teachers find themselves ill-equipped to handle such youngsters. The disparity in the background, in the cultural values, and even in the language of the teacher and his disadvantaged pupils seem, at first, to pose insurmountable obstacles.

In 1949, the U.S. Office of Education published a booklet entitled "High School - What's In It For Me?" At that time the high school dropout rate was one out of two. The blunt fact was that half of the youngsters did not find in high schools sufficient satisfaction to compensate for the discipline, the struggles, the frustrations, and the frequent failures in schools of that era.

A somewhat similar situation exists today insofar as our disadvantaged youth are concerned. The child who comes from a slum background, whose father is unemployed or missing, who is conditioned to poverty, may listen to what the school has to offer. However, all about him are evidences of other power factors. He sees the loan shark, the "pusher" of drugs, or the local "fence" flourishing. His unemployed parents may not be figures of admiration. The ladder of opportunity for him may seem to go nowhere. His concern is not with tomorrow; his energies are consumed in fighting today's battle and in satisfying today's needs.

Schools everywhere are experimenting with new ways of meeting the needs of these young people. The creativity reflected by the diversity of these attempts is most heartening. As men and women of good will and intelligence seek more effective ways of helping the culturally and educationally deprived, there are emerging good patterns and practices, some of which will be noted in this publication. We hope, also, to suggest further lines for experimentation.

What is the disadvantaged youth like?

As indicated, the disadvantaged youth may be of any ethnic group and from any part of the country. It is difficult, therefore, to generalize about his nature. Some of the disadvantaged readily adapt to the standards and practices of the conventional school, and these pose no special problems. For the majority, in the school as organized in the past, the cultural gap is so great that the adjustment cannot be made. Shepard[1] states:

> In general, culturally disadvantaged parents are unskilled or only semi-skilled; they possess little formal education and have low levels of aspiration. Living in a physical environment characterized by drabness, filth, and dilapidation, these adults see little hope in the future either for themselves or for their children. Worse still, they frequently feel themselves alienated from the mainstream of society and have limited access to and even more limited acquaintance with the social graces and such tangible manifestations of middle class culture as art exhibits, concerts, good literature, and the theatre. Often, because they are unfamiliar with these cultural opportunities, they are hostile to urban living and find themselves in conflict with its values, standards and requirements.
>
> Because of these parental attitudes and backgrounds, and because also of the generally inadequate income of these parents, the children of the culturally disadvantaged have to stay close to home, and as a result have few opportunities to experience either directly or vicariously those aspects of life which make for readiness for formal education and for the development of high incentives. These youngsters have inadequate experiential backgrounds, language development, and motivation. Worse still, they tend to adopt suspicious or hostile attitudes toward the school, which for them stands as a symbol of the power structure or of the middle class from which they have been excluded. They are, then, in a very real sense severely handicapped even before they enter school. Having identified with their parents, culturally disadvantaged children also have severely crippled self-images, low levels of expectancy, and little orientation toward school or the society it represents.

[1]Shepard, Samuel Jr. *Urban education and cultural deprivation.* Syracuse University School of Education, 1964.

What does the disadvantaged youth want in life?

Basically, he wants the same things other more fortunate youths seek: he wants to have the approval of the group with whom he associates; he wants to know about himself; he wants to get along with the opposite sex; he wants help in finding a way of life and a pattern of thinking that is satisfying (a philosophy of living); and perhaps most important of all to him at the moment, for it leads to the satisfaction of many other of his needs, he wants training for a career, whether it be a job or a profession.

Unless the school offers him a program that makes sense to him and offers solutions to his wants, he rejects what education has to offer, to his own peril and that of society.

The gravity of the problem

If we project the rapid change in the composition of our cities, it may well be that in a generation all, or nearly all, of the inhabitants of our large cities may be of the disadvantaged group. The consequences of such a shift are incalculable.

> The unrealized promise in the ignorant mind disturbs not only the idealist and the humanist; increasingly it haunts as well those concerned with the grim demands of national survival.[2]

Nor is the problem confined to those who are city dwellers. The rapid change in technology is driving increasing numbers of people from marginal and low occupations. The subsistence farmer, the industrial worker displaced by a new technology, and others who cannot adjust to economic change will all be affected. It is estimated that the child now in school will need to adjust to four or five different occupations during his lifetime as technology outmodes old processes. For the unskilled for whom jobs are decreasing, who are plagued by poverty, ignorance, and distrust, or who have not learned to be wise consumers, there may be a difficult day of reckoning. As the Educational Policies Commission points out:

> They are the last to be hired; the first to be fired; and the least able to manage the limited financial resources they have.[3]

This, then, is the compelling force which is motivating schools to change existing practices. Some of these adaptations will be examined later.

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[2]Educational Policies Commission, National Education Association. *Education and the disadvantaged American.* Washington, D.C. 1962.

[3]Ibid.

General nature of changes taking place

Almost all cities and many smaller communities have begun programs for the lower socioeconomic groups. Names for projects have proliferated, each seeking to indicate by the title the nature of the help. These projects are usually characterized by the pouring in of special services, supplies, materials, trips for cultural enrichment, ethnic aides, extra teachers and counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, and consulting psychiatrists. The aim is that of making the pupil feel that he is the center of concern on the part of the school community.

It is interesting to note that these projects have begun at every level: preschool, elementary, junior high, senior high, and even schools for adults.

Nor are such programs limited to public or parochial school children. Increasingly, colleges are seeking out promising youth, even among the elementary age group. The State University system runs an Education Opportunity Program for economically and academically disadvantaged youth, which includes special tutoring and counseling. Similar programs are run by The City University of New York and many private colleges.

School programs - a continuum

It is obvious that all secondary experience must build upon elementary school foundations. The programs for disadvantaged children of both preschool and elementary school age are constantly being strengthened. Many such children have gone through the experience of preschool education which emphasizes language development, the building of a positive self-image, and concept and readiness development. Many have experienced tutorial programs to compensate for the lack of opportunity created by social conditions. Remedial programs both within and beyond the school day are frequently offered. Reading clinics, corrective reading programs, and reading and mathematics improvement programs are aimed at raising educational levels. Supportive services of attendance teachers, guidance counselors, and social workers have helped elementary pupils to succeed in school and encouraged families to support the efforts of the school. Elementary pupils entering junior high school are generally accustomed to the close contact with one teacher and to programs which are adjusted to individual needs and abilities. One of the problems of the secondary school is to help in the pupil's transition to a different type of organization. Another is to learn more about the pupil's abilities and needs. Group planning of both teachers and supportive staff aids in understanding individual needs and in providing well-rounded programs.

PROGRAM PRIOR.TIES 1973-74 - TITLE I, ESEA

Priorities

The three program priorities which have been established for compensatory education, including Title I, ESEA for school year 1973-74, are bilingual education (as appropriate), reading, and mathematics. For those local school districts serving non-English-speaking pupils, their needs in reading and/or mathematics education must be met first. The needs of these educationally disadvantaged children including the handicapped may be considered in the broad spectrum from preschool programs to and including the 12th grade. Schools should study their particular needs and provide programs to impact deficiencies in the priority areas. Particular attention needs to be focused on pupil performance in grades 1-6. Nonpublic school pupils are eligible under Title I, ESEA.

For the purpose of these priorities, bilingual education means the use of two languages, one of which is English, as mediums of instruction for the same pupil population, in a well-organized program of reading, mathematics, and the critical communication and computational areas.

A project application presented as a composite or umbrella program in bilingual education, reading, and/or mathematics may include staff supportive services which are clearly essential to the effectiveness of the program activity in achieving the program objectives. These staff supportive services must be directed towards and concentrated only on the participants in the program.

It should be noted that while this document suggests ways in which the program for the disadvantaged may be enriched, reimbursement for programs is strictly limited to the priority areas mentioned above.

Reading

Reading achievement continues to be a major concern of the ESEA Title I program and Urban Education, which is State-funded. With the establishment of reading, mathematics, and bilingual education as priorities which must be dealt with before any unrelated programs can be funded, it is important that criteria for compensatory reading programs be reiterated.

Program criteria

For continuation of an existing program or for approval of new programs, the following criteria must be met:

1. Systematic assessment of the student's individual reading needs will be provided.
2. Specific program objectives will be defined in relation to student needs.
3. These will be met through a prescriptive program using materials and techniques appropriate to the levels and behavioral styles of the students involved.

4. The program description provides information as to the relation of the supplementary instruction to the regular school reading program.

5. Concrete evidence of student achievement (preferably reported in terms of previous growth in reading) must be included in proposals for recycling.

   In addition to varied instructional materials which permit many teaching alternatives within a program, the proposal should indicate the amount of time to be spent and the materials which will be available to the program participant for independent reading activities.

6. Individual records must be kept of each student's performance for the duration of the program. These provide information on individual instructional objectives, instructional activities, and the degree to which the student has achieved these objectives.

7. Appropriate inservice and continuing supervision for program personnel must be provided for all.

8. Opportunities for joint inservice training must be available to teachers and paraprofessionals.

Prekindergarten and early primary programs

In most instances early intervention, using a highly motivating readiness or beginning reading program, has produced more satisfactory results than have remedial programs at later levels. Proposals for reading programs at the early primary levels which qualify for approval as reading programs must identify the specific skills and abilities which will be developed through the activities proposed. While many proposals include the more general social and emotional program goals for early childhood education, it is preferable that these should be met through the school's general education program. The program should be specifically oriented to develop the abilities and skills which relate directly to reading success. The program activities should supplement and not supplant the general program.

Reading and other disciplines

Since many districts are moving in the direction of integrated educational activities, many reading programs now operate in the context of other disciplines. However, to qualify as a reading proposal the program must indicate the specific ways in which it will aid in improving reading ability. It must identify the specific instructional objectives in reading which are to be attained through the prescribed instructional activities. The proposal should describe the manner in which the other activities are related to the reading process. It should also indicate the proportionate time in reading as compared to other activities. This is also applicable to programs coordinated with other disciplines such as science.

Supportive services in the reading program

Reading programs frequently involve such support services as school psychologists, school social workers, health services, and guidance counselors. Such positions are approvable under the reading priority if the services provided are directly related to the reading program. For example, a counselor or psychologist may be directly involved in specific activities such as the diagnosis of learning difficulties which have contributed to failure of the student to learn to read, prescribing treatment, and followup on program results.

EVALUATING YOUR READING PROGRAM

- Does your school have an active pre-K program which focuses attention on reading readiness activities? This must involve the parents who should receive information which describes opportunities for readiness activities that can begin in the home.
- Is there a program at K-1 level which specifically develops language and the perceptual skills which are prerequisite to early success in reading?
- Does diagnostic screening to determine the approach which is most appropriate for each child begin in kindergarten? Is this based on informal and formal diagnostic testing as well as teacher observation? Do teachers test children individually in order to know each child's instructional level, strengths, and weaknesses?
- Are teachers able to administer Informal Reading Inventories to determine appropriate instructional level?
- Are teachers familiar with many programs and able to select those which are most appropriate for each child?
- Is grouping flexible and based upon the specific skills which youngsters require?
- Is each child's progress continuously evaluated and his program modified to meet his needs? Is reading progress continuous and at an appropriate pace for each child?
- Are multilevel, varied, supplemental materials available in your school?
- Are teachers familiar with their use and encouraged to employ them?
- Are libraries an integral part of your reading program? Can they serve as multimedia centers to provide opportunities for the differentiation of instruction and assignments? Does the library provide classroom collections?
- Do experienced reading teachers devote a major portion of their time assisting classroom teachers in diagnosis, in prescribing appropriate instruction, and in demonstrating new materials?
- Do the entire staff and the administration cooperate in an effort to provide an atmosphere which is conducive to learning?
- Is an inservice program provided for classroom teachers? If so, does it include:
  - informal kinds of diagnosis?
  - prescriptive teaching?
  - use of resources?
  - techniques for recordkeeping?
  - techniques for teaching reading skills in content areas?
- Has a complete inventory of multilevel supplementary materials which are available in the district been provided for each teacher?
- Is priority in the corrective reading program given to students who have the potential capacity to make rapid progress?
- Is the diagnosis of all children who receive corrective or remedial assistance specific and is instruction prescriptive?

- Are ancillary services which support and strengthen the reading program provided for your school? (psychological services, medical services, library services, social services, etc.)
- Are junior high and secondary teachers given the most recent reading achievement scores of their students when the fall term begins?
- Do intermediate and junior high teachers make the teaching of reading skills an integral part of their plans? In the specific vocabulary for each content area taught?
- Is assistance in the development of study skills emphasized?
- Are assignments differentiated according to each student's reading ability?
- Are instructional materials at the pre-K level of difficulty students can use successfully?
- Are high interest, low vocabulary reading materials which will motivate reluctant readers available in classroom libraries?
- Does the literature program use materials of interest and at levels students understand?
- Is time provided in the school day for all youngsters to enjoy independent reading?
- Do secondary teachers prepare vocabulary guides, study guides, and idea guides, etc., which are sufficiently differentiated to insure the success of each student in the subject matter areas?
- Is there a districtwide reading program which establishes common goals and objectives for all schools?
- Does the atmosphere and "tone" of your school reflect the careful organization and planning which is conducive to learning? Is warmth, humaneness, and positive reinforcement emphasized?
- Is emphasis at all levels placed upon individualization of instruction?
- Does your reading teacher have sufficient time to assist classroom teachers or is she overscheduled with youngsters in the corrective reading program?
- Are parent volunteers encouraged to actively participate in the reading program?
- Have you developed an evaluation design which includes information about individual pupil progress as well as total school evaluation?
- Are you considering the incorporation of criterion reference testing in the near future?

Mathematics

Elsewhere in this publication, characteristics of educationally disadvantaged students are discussed and recommendations are made for meeting the needs of these students in several instructional areas. This section will discuss in greater detail procedures through which the mathematics instruction of the educationally disadvantaged can be improved.

The problem being considered is indeed serious. Several recent reports imply that New York State schools are not doing a good job of teaching mathematics to all children. Students in the larger cities, particularly disadvantaged students in minority groups and low-income households, are not performing well on standardized mathematics achievement tests. The results on these tests indicate a need for a reevaluation of mathematics instructional programs and services offered in our schools to educationally disadvantaged students in order to cope with the serious problem of low achievement in mathematics.

For those who are concerned with the teaching of mathematics and with the concurrent learning of mathematics, the implications of these test results are clear. The specific learning characteristics of educationally disadvantaged students must be identified, and programs and methodologies must be devised to capitalize on the strong points of these characteristics. However, we realize that the long-range goal of such efforts must be to effect changes in the regular instructional programs which will eventually make the special programs unnecessary.

From some of the more general discussions in other parts of this publication, it is evident that in order to launch successfully an adequate mathematics program for the disadvantaged, there must be adequate staffing for its implementation. A prime need is a core of teachers who are personally convinced that the typical textbook-centered, expository style of instruction does not usually produce good results with the educationally disadvantaged students. This is especially true in mathematics instruction.

The concerned administrator will find that there is no one best kind of program for the disadvantaged. In mathematics instruction, as well as in the other areas, we must carefully consider the severity and causes of underachievement, the available and obtainable instructional personnel, the community and educational environment, and the school district and its resources, in our attempts to design a workable program.

The mathematics curriculum

What mathematics content should we aim to teach the educationally disadvantaged student? The Department philosophy is that the selection of unit topics should be based on the assumption that the basic needs of the disadvantaged student are, fundamentally, the same as those of the advantaged student, not something different or less. However, it must be realized that the motivating devices and the teaching techniques need to be different.

Some disadvantaged low achievers lack interest in mastering mathematics abstractions as they are presented in many textbooks. They profit from manipulative materials and concrete devices which they can handle and which help them understand significant mathematical principles. There should be a variety of materials to provide opportunities of interest to each individual at a level of difficulty which will assure a consistently high degree of success.

Such materials cannot be picked haphazardly, but must be tied in with the desired outcomes of mathematics instruction, though there may be room for some materials which serve only to generate interest. The three general outcomes that mathematics instruction strives for are computational skills, mathematical understanding, and problem solving techniques. After the specific outcomes have been decided upon, then relevant curricular materials and devices can be developed. Again, it must be stressed that current thinking concerning the appropriate curriculum emphasis for educationally disadvantaged students leans strongly toward the maintenance of adequate subject content.

The materials which are developed for mathematics instruction of the disadvantaged need to be compatible with the short attention span of this pupil caused by his weak motivation. A short attention span requires short-range instructional objectives. Single concept film loops, programed pamphlets, and the use of a calculator in problem solving activities are examples of fresh approaches which take into account the limitations of a short attention span.

There are good psychological reasons why it is best not to use, at least in the beginning, materials which the educationally disadvantaged student associates with past failures. Materiass different from the usual textbook assist the student in new experiences in learning mathematics. Since, in almost all cases, underachievement in mathematics is accompanied by reading difficulties, the new materials should not be highly dependent on reading achievement. Materials in comic book format, mathematical games and puzzles, and records and tapes represent materials which are feasible attempt attempts to overcome the reading disability. At later stages, a text may be gradually reintroduced. In summary, materials and approaches need to be generated which will serve to rekindle interest, self-confidence, and self-image so necessary to a successful mathematics program for the disadvantaged student.

Improving the mathematics classroom interaction

The disadvantaged student's full learning potential will be realized when a home environment conducive to learning is supported by good environmental conditions in the school. Although school personnel may try to affect the pupils' home environment, their prime concern is the school environment. In the mathematics area, such a school environment should attempt to offer this student a solid body of content with intellectual challenge, the main difference being in the approach. Since the experiential background of disadvantaged students is usually quite limited, the teacher must capitalize upon the familiar and known experiences of these students.

What is needed is a methodology which meets the needs of the youngsters involved. Rather than concentrating on the rote learning of facts and rules, with the student listening passively to what the teacher tells him, the mathematics classroom must provide the student with experiences which encourage him to make his own conclusions and generalizations. The student must become a partner in the learning of what he believes and what he sees.

As discussed previously, abstractions must be introduced carefully to the disadvantaged student -- consequently, a mathematics laboratory approach represents a feasible procedure. Through multisensory inputs, mathematics laboratory equipment can help to facilitate a desired personalized learning experience. However, many mathematics teachers regard the mathematics laboratory as more a style of teacher-student interaction than a physical location or organization of equipment. In this approach, the teacher devotes most of his instructional time to involving small groups and individual students in appropriate interactions with materials and devices in order to develop and fix concepts and mathematical procedures and approaches.

Individualized prescriptions may also be used by the teacher to foster the individualization of instruction. Ideally, an individualized program is one in which a diagnosis of student achievement, ability, personality, learning habits, attitudes, and interests determines the basis for an individual prescription of learning activities appropriate for that particular student, disadvantaged or advantaged. However, the procedure may have particular use for the disadvantaged student.

The individualized prescriptions or learning packages may well be multimedia in nature, thus taking advantage of the more current technological developments to bypass any reading disability. For instance, the use of the tape recorder, with each student having his own earphones, enables him to work independently on a mathematical concept or procedure, in addition to helping him concentrate on following directions. The student's response need not be limited to writing numbers or words but could include the construction of visual displays, graphs, or models to demonstrate his understanding.

Although the teacher should seek to individualize the prescriptions in this approach, he need not design the learning experiences to involve only individual students. The creative teacher will devise mathematics prescriptions which, at times, may call for several students to work together in some investigation or in using concrete manipulative materials or in interacting with the teacher. Such group interactions are most desirable and perhaps even necessary for effective learning of mathematics by disadvantaged students.

Finally, it is suggested that the teacher should not designate completely all the activities the student is to follow. To provide further for individual differences, the prescriptions should, at times, permit the student to choose whether he will work independently, with a small group, or with a large group, as he explores a particular mathematical concept. Thus, ideally, the disadvantaged student will spend his time learning mathematics in a variety of settings.

Because of the short attention span of the disadvantaged student, the teacher will want to use a variety of approaches. Another teaching procedure which may be useful in working with disadvantaged students is the game technique whereby the group is divided into teams which compete against each other in solving mathematics problems. To increase interest and involvement, the teams at times, may, construct the problems to be solved by the other teams. To make this procedure an effective learning experience in mathematics, the teacher must create problems which call for the participants to take into account varying factors, rather than responding in a drill-type fashion. Thus, at times, the game situation should call for reasoning, for perception of the situation, or for insight to reach the solution. Activities of this nature are just as pertinent to the disadvantaged student as to the more advantaged student.

The foregoing suggestions are by no means exhaustive. The imaginative teacher will be able to design additional procedures to supplement and implement his mathematics program. In summary, to foster more effective learning by the disadvantaged student, the teacher must design a classroom interaction in which there is the increased use of media, increased pupil activity, increased availability of pertinent materials, models and devices, and the increased integration of special topics or units geared to the special characteristics of the disadvantaged student. Of course, the relative proportions of these ingredients will vary from lesson to lesson.

Community involvement in the mathematics program

The disadvantaged student will make his best progress when the positive aspects of his school and his home environment are coordinated and supplement each other. Various plans for home and community involvement must take into account the fact that, often, neither parent of the disadvantaged student is available during the normal school hours.

One procedure which may provide for greater home involvement is the organization of evening parent seminars which meet on a regular basis. If, during such sessions, the school could provide care for younger children who cannot be left alone at night, more parents may wish to attend.

Such seminars, which seek to involve the parents in generating a better home environment for learning, would have a twofold mission relative to the learning of mathematics by the students: (1) to assist the parents in grasping the mathematical concepts which are being taught to their children and (2) to help parents and teachers in reaching a common ground in understanding the special needs and difficulties of the disadvantaged student, as these relate to the learning of mathematics.

Program evaluation

In order to provide an adequate basis for judgments concerning the continuance and/or needed modifications of a program designed to provide more effective learning experiences in mathematics for disadvantaged students, such programs must have built into them evaluative procedures. The inputs used need not be limited to written test results but may include other means of measuring student progress. It is recommended that the procedures include attempts to determine improvement in student performance at the higher levels of mathematical functioning involved in problem solving activities, in addition to the measurement of increments in computational skills. Computational skills are needed to function adequately in our society but they are at the lowest level of the cognitive hierarchy.

In addition, it is suggested that it is extremely important to evaluate such areas as attitudes toward mathematics as there are indications that negative attitudes may be causal factors in producing significant underachievement. The instrumentation should include inventories for these affective measures as well as the usual achievement tests.

Bilingual Education

"On Target - Educational Programs for Disadvantaged," Volume III, Number 3, has this to say about bilingual education:

"Differences in language and culture effectively exclude approximately 300,000 children from meaningful participation in our educational system. Failure of schools to respond to the educational needs of these children results in academic failure, demonstrated sequentially by low reading scores, high dropout rate, and barriers to entry into meaningful employment. This is the plight of many of our non-English speaking pupils and is the problem being addressed by the Board of Regents in this position paper.

"A fundamental tenet of bilingual education is that a person living in a society whose language and culture differ from his own must be equipped to participate meaningfully in the mainstream of that society. It should not be necessary for him to sacrifice his rich native language and culture to achieve such participation. Rather, we should utilize available language skills and thought processes to foster intellectual development while developing English language proficiency."

Similar concern was sounded by the Fleischmann report which, in speaking of children with foreign language difficulties, stated:

"The most distressing incidence of academic failure the Commission has uncovered occurs among a group of children who are handicapped by a language barrier in the classroom -- those 160,000* children whose native language is not English and whose difficulty comprehending English significantly impedes successful school performance. Aside from curtailing the learning process with respect to any subject matter immediately at hand, the inability to comprehend the language of instruction results in frustration and humiliation which can and often does retard a child and render him unable to learn even under more favorable conditions.

* Note that the Regent's paper and the Fleischmann report have essential differences in classification — "Differences in language and culture..." in contrast to "children who are handicapped by a language barrier."

"Commission studies have found that too many children sit idly and silently in classrooms, divorced from the learning process, simply because they do not understand English. Large numbers of children are classified as 'mentally retarded' or 'nonreaders' because they do not perform well on intelligence and reading tests administered in a language which is not native to them and with which they have insufficient facility. There is even evidence that children with limited ability to speak English who are assigned to exclusively English-speaking classrooms not only fail to learn to read English but never acquire, or in some cases lose, the ability to read their native language.

"There are two fundamental approaches to the instruction of foreign-language-speaking children who have difficulty comprehending and speaking English:

1. Under the English as a Second Language (ESL) approach, all instruction is conducted in English, generally in classrooms in which children with language difficulties are integrated with English-speaking children; special English language instruction is also provided for those who need it.

2. Under the 'bilingual approach' instruction is conducted in both English and the student's native language in varying proportions, depending upon the student's needs. Under this approach there may also be special English instruction for those who need it. The goal of the bilingual approach--like ESL--is English fluency for students, though important correlative objectives of bilingualism are retention of fluency in the student's native language and familiarity with his native culture. He is also assured that he will not be penalized in his school work while he masters the English language."

While the Commission states that the primary goal is English fluency for students, of equal importance is the child's retention of his native language and culture.

Bilingual programs are arranged to enable students to learn subject content in two languages simultaneously (using two languages during the same class period) or concurrently (using each of the languages in separate class periods). Students participating are usually those whose mother tongue is other than English but of the same foreign language background. A bilingual teacher or a teacher and bilingual paraprofessionals are used to conduct these programs.

Bilingual programs are also arranged on a period-by-period basis or during morning and afternoon sessions. In this setting, participating students learn subject matter concurrently in both languages, but not simultaneously. Participation of English and non-English-speaking students in a bilingual class is most desirable.

Program evaluation

The teaching-learning process must have an adequate basis for measuring the continuous growth of every pupil. Programs designed to provide effective learning must have meaningful evaluative procedures. The evaluation should be comprehensive and should stimulate the student toward improvement. Evaluation devices should attempt to measure the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills of the child. Individual growth in computational skills, transitional bilingual fluency, and reading comprehension are essential.

Title VII ESEA is designed to show school districts how to institute bilingual-bicultural programs. With the increased impetus provided by such funding and with the recognition of the problem both by the Regents and the Fleischmann Commission, it is anticipated that considerable interest will be generated in such programs in New York State. For those who are interested in this problem and are thinking of establishing bilingual programs, the following materials will be helpful:

Bilingual Education - A Statement of Policy and Proposed Action by the Regents of the University of the State of New York, State Education Department, Albany

Report of the New York State Commission on the Quality, Cost and Financing of Elementary and Secondary Education, Volume II, Chapter 6

After Childhood, What Then?
An Overview of Ethnic Language Retention (ELRET) programs in the United States, Robert L. Muckley, Revista Review Interamicana, Volume II, No. 1 - Spring 1972

Spanish Speaking Students and Standardized Tests, Perry Alan Zirkel, Urban Review, June 1972

E.S.E.A. Title VII Bilingual Programs
Bilingual Education Unit, State Education Department, Albany

Early Childhood Programs for Non-English-Speaking Children,
State Education Department, Albany

A Handbook for Teachers of English As a Second Language Instruction (ESL), Bilingual Education Unit, State Education Department, Albany

IMPORTANT ELEMENTS IN DESIGNING A PROGRAM FOR THE DISADVANTAGED

1. *The attitude of the administration is vital.* Since "an institution is the lengthened shadow of a man," school districts which have the strongest programs are apt to be those where administrators have demonstrated that they sincerely support the efforts of teachers to meet the needs of disadvantaged youth. Such administrators have provided the interest, the commendation, the facilities, and the supportive services needed to make good teaching of such youngsters possible.

2. *A multilevel curriculum is required.* As in any large group, there will be found among the disadvantaged those of superior mental ability, many of whom adjust well to traditional school methods and materials. There will also be many of average ability for whom some classroom adaptations in technique are indicated, and some with limited understandings who will require special treatment and a special curriculum. There also may be those of high mental ability and dexterity whose talents are clouded by their inability to read and communicate verbally. Practical activities in the fields of reading, mathematics, and bilingual education often offer motivation for this group.

3. *Extremes of educational practices should be avoided in dealing with the disadvantaged.* There are those who advocate no change in the requirements and offerings for the disadvantaged. The best evidence that this practice will not work with the majority of these children is the fact that, although there are economic and other reasons, many of the disadvantaged have "voted with their feet" by dropping out of school at the earliest opportunity. Nor should educators be quick to reject all of the standard programs and requirements and adopt radical programs following only the momentary interests of youth. The disadvantaged must become productive and, therefore, need to be equipped with the skills, the attitudes, and the abilities for such adjustment.

4. *We must accept the fact that disadvantaged pupils, like all children, come to school with varying degrees of ability and interest and with differing backgrounds.* The assumption should be that, at his own rate, the disadvantaged child may reach performance levels as high as those of the child who begins formal education with advantages which temporarily place him farther along the educational ladder.

5. *Learning experiences must be selected which demonstrate the close relationship between school and the living experience of the disadvantaged.* This is particularly true of secondary school pupils where correlation is needed between the subject matter taught and employment opportunities. The goals toward which the disadvantaged are directed must be immediate and have real meaning for them.

6. *The greater the involvement of the family and the community in the learning process, the greater the possibilities are for success.* The feeling that someone cares about what we do, that someone takes joy in our success and feels regret at our failure, is a universal human attribute. Thus, the more we enlist family and community members in the school progress of the disadvantaged child, the more likely he is to want to do well.

7. *The teacher needs to remember and apply sound principles of educational psychology as they pertain to the learning experience.* The advantaged child may have motivation built in and constantly reinforced by the home and environment. For the disadvantaged child, the teacher may need to supply the motivating force.

8. *Disadvantaged children have, or can develop, aspirations not unlike those of advantaged children.* They want the rewards a better income can provide, and they want to be equipped with the skills and understandings to be accepted on their own merits.

9. *There is ample evidence that the disadvantaged have cultures of their own which also have values.* Their experiences in school should be designed to build upon these established values. Their self-reliance, their family and group loyalties, their ability to squeeze the juice of life from everyday things, their toughness -- these are things from which all might well learn. Attention should be given to the rich, although diverse, histories, backgrounds, and cultures of the various minorities in this State and to their contributions to the American scene.

10. *Because of impoverishment, the disadvantaged youth will need special opportunities to identify with admirable role models and enjoy extra attention.* These needs imply more teaching staff, more supplementary resource personnel, more enriching experiences, and perhaps most important, identification with one of their own ethnic group who has "made it" in life.

11. *Textbooks of the type used in the past may have only limited use.* Many such texts, which assume contexts and understandings foreign to the experience of the educationally deprived, are reminders of past frustration. Certainly they cannot serve, as they so often do for the advantaged, as the course of study for the year. Happily, texts of a different type are now appearing which may have greater usefulness for the disadvantaged than has been the case in the past.

12. *An attitude of positive expectation is essential.* The curricula should be designed to challenge each student at his own level. Although the work will begin at the existing level of the child, the aim and the expectation should be that ever more challenging experiences will be introduced and that the pupil will master them.

13. *Units of work must be short, meaningful, varied, and rich in promise of success.* Goals must be understood and accepted. Standards as well as techniques and materials must be commensurate with the pupil's stage of progress rather than with his chronological age. Instruction must

be systematic and meaningful, to promote security and learning efficiency. Each step of the total process should be taught in a very concrete way. The teacher must break each process down into its smallest parts, even though he himself sees it as a whole.

14. *The abilities and interests of pupils may be used as motivational forces.* If a student has real talent or interest in a given field, encouragement and recognition will help to build his self-image and may encourage him to succeed in other unrelated fields. Art, industrial arts, home economics, and music offer especially rich opportunities. Through constructing, drawing, painting, and sculpturing, the manipulative and creative urges are satisfied. Singing or playing an instrument often reveals traits of personality, interest, and talents which enrich the school experiences of the youngster. Similarly many disadvantaged youth are interested in sports -- football, basketball, boating, swimming, pool, hiking, camping. Relating instruction to such activities or such interests as those of the automobile or motorcycle may serve as a motivator for reading and mathematics.

15. *Things are more caught than taught.* If we wish the disadvantaged pupil to be considerate of others, we must reflect this consideration in dealing with him. If we wish him to show enthusiasm for learning, we must reflect this enthusiasm ourselves as teachers. "How can we hope to light a fire in others if the spark has gone out in us?" If we wish the disadvantaged to follow desirable rules of conduct and self-discipline, we, the teachers, need to exemplify these attributes. If we wish him to read,we must demonstrate the fun and the rewards of reading --and how better to do that than to share this experience by reading to the class those passages that add illumination, humor, excitement, understanding of life?

SOME PROMISING PRACTICES

Some of the current developments associated with the improvement of opportunities for the disadvantaged are these:

Smaller class sizes

One of the most effective devices has been to reduce the size of the class with which the teacher of the disadvantaged is working. Admittedly, a teacher whose personality, interest, and drive are not suitable for work with the deprived can hardly be expected to do much better with fewer pupils. However, most experienced teachers agree that, other things being equal, the greatest handicap to successful teaching is the large number of human beings with whom the teacher comes in contact. Too often there is not enough time to diagnose individual difficulties, to develop a remedial plan, to talk with the individual pupil, or to assist him with his own unique problems. As class size becomes smaller, more time is available for this invaluable help.

In their programs for the disadvantaged, some cities have instituted the "three-for-two" plan in which an additional teacher is added for each two teachers, thus reducing class size from 30 to 20, perhaps. Other systems have boldly gone much beyond this ratio. In one area two teachers are employed for 18 students, making a ratio of 9 to 1; but, whatever degree of relief is afforded, more time is available and the potential for greater help is present. The teacher is also better able to call upon and use the professional services of other staff members in the school.

Use of teacher assistants

Many schools have made progress through the use of teacher aides. These assistants go by various names: paraprofessionals, helping teachers, ethnic aides, etc., but, whatever they are called, they assist the regular teacher by providing the immediate one-to-one help which many disadvantaged pupils need. Often, too, the ethnic aides provide a bridge of understanding between the homes and the community to the school. Indeed, it is suggested that full use be made of the capabilities of such individuals. Since they live and work in the community, they are often able to work more successfully with parents than can the teacher. They help in explaining what the school is trying to do, what the fears and longings of parents are, what the needs of pupils are. The best schools involve the teacher assistants in planning programs of instruction, selecting materials, conferring with parents, and avoiding tensions. Often their special knowledge of actions and words that might cause misunderstandings helps to keep the educational scene calm and appropriate for learning.

Organizational patterns

Many organizational patterns are followed in elementary schools. One pattern that may have promise is that of organizing "mini-schools," schools within schools, where the pupil is closely identified with a small group of youngsters instead of being lost in a large school. In some instances such mini-schools have separate entrances and corridors used only by those in the mini-school module. The aim is to build a closeness and team concept where pupils identify closely with their own companions and their own teachers. Such mini-schools have already proved their effectiveness on the secondary level.

On the high school level, one school system has a special 2-year "finishing school" for the disadvantaged dropout. It takes pupils who have had 6 years of elementary school, 3 years of junior high school, and 1 or 2 years of senior high school and creates for them a novel program, entirely unlike the traditional one. Two teachers, working as a team, conduct a classroom for all common learnings. Only for specialized areas such as industrial arts or physical education are these pupils under other instructors.

Another interesting pattern for the disadvantaged is found in one system which, in effect, moves the nongraded, single elementary class concept into the junior high school. This close identification with one teacher and the ability to progress at one's own speed seems effective in this situation.

Another development, that of the middle school, partially motivated by the desire for a greater degree of integration, is also of interest. The middle school movement, usually encompassing grades 6, 7, and 8 will have implications for both elementary and high school, as well as for junior high school programs. Experience with the middle school concept indicates many areas of success.

Team teaching and group planning

The assignment of a group of teachers, rather than a single one, has special possibilities for the disadvantaged. The difficulties of pupils from deprived areas cannot be alleviated to any marked degree unless the school works closely with the community. Team teaching can provide the flexibility of organization, as well as an attitude of mind, which promotes such cooperative effort. Including on the team adequate representation from the ethnic group to be served may be particularly effective in marshaling the resources of the community for the purpose of strengthening the classroom program. The team approach also allows time for the individual help and counseling so needed in a program of compensatory education, and makes possible maximum utilization of special abilities. The teacher who has had a firsthand experience, who has taken a trip, or who has a special hobby is uniquely equipped to lead a discussion with those who have not been exposed to that area of experience. Finally, the wisdom and knowledge of

the teacher most qualified to deal with educationally deprived children are available to all members of the team and should prove useful in helping less experienced teachers grow in ability. But whether or not the team approach is used, every pupil should feel that he has at least one teacher who really knows and cares about him.

Equipment and materials

Generally, teaching devices in themselves do not teach students. However, the skilled teacher who knows when and how to use these materials will find them a valuable adjunct. Good schools are constantly evaluating charts, multilevel texts, library books, art objects, instructional kits, films and filmstrips, word games, pictures, workbooks, duplicated materials, etc., and from these are selected those items which are appropriate for the learning unit underway. Judiciously used, these media can be a powerful influence in extending understandings and sharpening insights. Important as teaching materials and equipment are, however, their effectiveness is determined, to a large extent, by the physical environment in which they are used. Learning spaces should be designed not only to accommodate the needs of students and teachers, but must also be constructed to make the best use of teaching materials available.

The mass media of communication, particularly the newspapers, television, and motion pictures, exert a tremendous influence on students because much that they portray is geared to the interest and intellectual level of the high school youth. In addition, such materials have an appeal through illustrations and movement. There are endless resources available in such media: weather reports, experiments for science, adventure stories for oral reports, drama to supplement the word pictures of literature, and reports of job requirements and job openings.

Another fruitful source of material is that which pupils can bring in from places of employment. Such items can be used as sources of reference material for class discussion or for reports by students. Reading materials such as instructions for new employees, payroll explanations, personnel policies, forms and reports used on the job, instructions for specific job operations, or sample questions on qualifying tests are related to making a living and tend to motivate the class.

Concrete materials which the student may handle, and with which he may experiment, are useful. A micrometer such as a machinist uses may stimulate the desire to master decimals. Solids such as prisms, cylinders, and cubes aid in visualizing mathematical concepts. Transparencies made by the student challenge him to make visual his concepts and to share them with his class. Such materials help to promote a learning climate in which the student works with objects, asks questions, finds answers, discovers and shares new ideas.

OPTIONAL EDUCATION ENVIRONMENTS

Several optional programs have developed by which the needs of disadvantaged students can be met more adequately. One type of optional program is the Street Academy. These academies are places which attempt to provide a curriculum and a climate in which the disadvantaged may feel more at ease than they do in a traditional school and in which those who have not achieved success in regular schools may achieve. Frequently empty stores serve as the meeting places for learning. Education is focused upon the needs of the students. Instruction is often offered by those of the same ethnic group as those being taught. Frequently the learning is marked by some informality, with lively interchanges between instructor and members of the group, and with students free to move about. Emphasis is placed upon building a self-image. The instruction is focused directly upon student needs. Usually such academies are marked by an empathy between instructors and pupils not always found in the traditional school. Whether it is the low pupil-teacher ratio, the emphasis upon relevancy, the informality, the success in college entrance and job entrance, or a combination of several of these, the fact remains that these academies have earned a place in the educational process.

Some schools combine earning and learning while in school through the assignment of students to regular employment on a part time or "week in-week out" basis. "Target" or "special emphasis" schools may provide both a comprehensive education and a specialized vocational training which make for easy entry into the job market. Among these schools are those emphasizing hospital training and indepth preparations for aviation, science, nursing, automotive, art and design, and commercial backgrounds. The likelihood of employment serves as a motivational spur to students.

Satellite or optional schools are small, modular structures, usually attached to a parent school, developed for the purpose of providing an optional educational route for students who for any one of a variety of reasons are not succeeding in the standard school setting. These schools are characterized by a lower pupil-teacher ratio and custom tailoring of the curriculum to meet needs and interests of students. Emphasis is placed on removing or ameliorating the tension sometimes found in traditional schools.

School administrators in some areas of the State have produced new programs with a meaningful emphasis on the development of occupational skills. These programs place a strong emphasis upon the basic skills of communication, computation, responsible citizenship, occupational awareness, and scientific understanding. The programs are designed to help students move in positive directions and testing and evaluation is undertaken to determine student aptitude levels of achievement so that programs can be highly individualized in their nature and approach. Students begin the program at their present levels of achievement and show measurable growth in achievement and skill development. Flexible programing encourages the use of field trips, visitations, and the meaningful development of academic and occupational skills. A major goal of this type of educational program is to provide students with opportunities that will insure their employability and/or their ability to pursue further education or training. Program flexibility and the opportunity for students

to move into the world of work or into new academic pursuits encourages increases in student achievement.

The whole field of work experience in New York State holds promise for the disadvantaged who are in need of the "green power" necessary to buy the goods and services which others enjoy. Such programs range from agricultural education through distributive education, home economics, office, trade, industrial, and technical education, and include general work experience, the school-to-employment program, and vocational work study. Further information on these programs may be obtained from the Office of Occupational Education, State Education Department.

APPLICATION OF THE DISCOVERY APPROACH

The modern emphasis upon the pupil's becoming involved in the learning process by asking questions, locating information, exploring material, drawing inferences, and developing concepts seems particularly appropriate for the disadvantaged. These pupils may enjoy manipulating materials, using motor skills, and having student discussions. They can be led into observing more carefully and generalizing more wisely. The concept of learning as a game of discovery helps to bring such areas as our social organization and our scientific concepts into the personal consciousness of pupils.

As youth reach the secondary school, they have generally evolved a somewhat definite sense of values growing out of their life experiences. Since some of these values may be contrary to the prevailing social, moral, civic, economic, and political concepts of current society, additional emphasis should be placed upon a learning process which includes the contrasting of these beliefs in terms of positive and negative approaches in arriving at decisions. Some of the disadvantaged may hold confirmed beliefs in the value of the quick and easy dollar; the inability of the law to equate justice; and the indifference of the public towards their basic needs for decent housing, suitable clothing, steady employment, and an overall even chance. The students should discover the positive achievements of the Lincolns and Douglasses, the Wrights, the Bassetts, the Kings, and especially of the successful men and women in their own community and of their own ethnic group, who hold high values of American life.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER ADVANCES

> What is needed now is some fresh approach to the discovery and cultivation of the talents that undoubtedly exist among millions of children from unpromising backgrounds. The usual tests won't identify these able pupils; the usual curriculum won't challenge them; the usual teachers won't inspire them.
>
> Watson[4]

One of the limitations in making greater progress in educating the disadvantaged is the gap between educational theory and practice. In

[4] Watson, Goodwin, quoted in *The culturally deprived child* by Frank Riesmann. New York, Harper & Row, 1962.

theory, educators have believed for years that education is not merely a matter of teaching certain skills and certain information; rather it is the activation of ideas and the changing of behavior for the better, both within and beyond the classroom. In theory, good teaching is based upon individual diagnosis, adaptation of curricular experience to the needs and abilities of pupils, differentiation, and developmental teaching.

Perhaps what is needed most for the disadvantaged is not some magic new formula that would sweep away all existing patterns and practices, but rather the application of known, sound psychological and educational principles to this problem. We have always had the disadvantaged pupil with us. In other days he came largely from rural homes or from the families of recent immigrants. Indeed, he may never have achieved high school status since he did not always measure up to grade standards of achievement. Nevertheless, the school's job has been, and continues to be, that of taking the child at his own stage in educational progress and lifting his understandings, insights, and behavior to the limit of his capacity. The unique problem of teaching the disadvantaged lies in the special insights and the special emphases toward which attention is directed in this paper.

In this endeavor it is proposed that some thought be given to the following suggestions, not because they are new but because they may refocus attention on areas where research and psychology indicate promising rewards.

The teacher -- selection and inservice training

> "Not all the books on all the shelves,
> But what the teachers are themselves."

The greatest hope for improving the quality of instruction for the disadvantaged lies in more careful selection and further training of teachers. Sometimes teachers who are insecure in this assignment and reluctant to accept the added responsibility are assigned to the disadvantaged. What is needed are strong, understanding people, willing, if not indeed eager, to understand and teach those who have been deprived. There are not enough such teachers now. Fortunately, teacher education institutions are focusing more and more upon this problem, and it is reasonable to expect that a larger supply of teachers specifically trained for this work will be forthcoming. A second source of recruits is from the intern or practice teaching field. Often college students assigned to disadvantaged areas find a responsiveness and need which makes them decide to enter successful team approach orientation. Another source of teachers for the disadvantaged is Peace Corps returnees, whose training and experience may provide unusual insights.

The selection of teachers is an administrative responsibility; but the continuing education of the staff should be a shared responsibility in which the administration provides the resources and climate for learning, but where the teachers and supervisors also eagerly learn. The development of insights into the life of the disadvantaged is essential. Teachers need to understand the influence of class and race upon disadvantaged children. The child who has been taught to expect disdain from white people and who sees the differences and distance between black and white may well have a block to learning.

Teacher attitudes

Since "the effectiveness of a teacher with the disadvantaged is more in the heart than in the mind,"[5] intellectual understandings or insights do not suffice. To be sure, teachers need an insight into the effect of life which is crowded, life amid unsanitary conditions, life amid noise, life amid the unemployed, life amid broken homes, life with frequently harsh and undeserved physical punishment. Beyond insights must come empathy for the disadvantaged child. The teacher's friendliness, his willingness to listen and to learn, his genuine feeling, these reflect his sincerity. And, since qualities are more often caught than taught, the youngster with intuitive perspicacity will sense that here is a friend. A wise teacher once said, "If you first like children then you can teach them anything."

The problem of improving teachers' attitudes toward the disadvantaged is critical for effective classroom instruction. It is not beyond hope to believe, however, with the social focus at work, with the attitude that the job can be done, and with inservice work, that more of the type of teacher education now going forward can succeed in changing attitudes. In such training it is suggested that as much emphasis be placed on influencing attitudes and emotions as upon intellectual understandings. Allied with this emphasis upon the attitude of the teacher is greater understanding of the nature of the child. Teachers may wish to remind themselves from time to time that what a pupil feels is real to him, whereas what he reads or hears may not be. Teachers need to accept him as he is, rather than as they feel he should be. Secondly, a wholesome opportunity for release of emotions is desirable. Teachers should provide more opportunities for pupil discussion. Aside from the exchange of understandings, there is a therapeutic value in such free classroom discussion. Such a situation will develop not only better understandings but promising areas for further study as well.

More realistic curricula

Second only to the nature of the teacher is the nature of the experiences to be offered to pupils. Materials which deal realistically with the student's life are imperative. But, like all boys and girls, the disadvantaged youth is also interested in the imaginative and the creative. Teachers who know adolescents' interests and understandings are best qualified to select the suitable learning experiences. Reference has been made to the value of the newspaper, periodicals, television, and the motion picture in this regard. (English teachers will find specific suggestions in the Department publication, *Using Mass Media in Teaching English.*) Some schools are developing their own curriculum units growing out of the needs and expressed desires of the disadvantaged groups.

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5 Shapp, Charles M. *The disadvantaged child: insights & issues.* New York, New York State Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1963.

Since the school's job is to equip all pupils, including the disadvantaged, to take constructive places in our society, it is hoped that, ultimately, many of the experiences which we offer to advantaged children in the traditional curriculum will come to have more and more significance and interest for the disadvantaged. However, that ideal may need to be deferred until motivation and interest have developed with other types of learning. We may need to begin with other types of literature, other types of science, and other experiences of citizenship than those offered in traditional texts. A book fair with thousands of attractively illustrated books among which students may browse can whet a reading appetite which may later be channeled toward some of the classics. A social studies project which begins with visiting city hall to see how cities take care of problems may lead to an interest in cleaning up the neighborhood or school yard. A television program or a trip to a museum may motivate a pupil to talk to the class or to join in a group discussion and later create a desire to be a more effective speaker. A job application may develop an interest in writing correctly and effectively. A discussion of how the auto salesman subtly sells accessories may arouse an interest in the psychology of why we behave like human beings. The writing of an autobiography to be shown to friends and family may more effectively improve written expression than several units of formal grammar. Practice in making announcements over the public address system may move students to be more careful of diction and enunciation than hours of explanation and exhortation in a less meaningful situation. Predicting the weather and checking on the accuracy of the prediction may lead the student to explore some of the devices which man has created to help him do this job more scientifically. The study of classified advertisements for help wanted may develop an awareness that there is little place in the business world for the uneducated and stimulate further study in school.

Relevant offerings

Schools are finding that some of the newer courses have attraction for the disadvantaged. One such course, Consumer Education, which deals with effective money management and how to secure the maximum satisfaction from our resources has significance for all students. It includes both general principles and practices of purchasing and the specifics for purchasing automobiles, food, clothing, shelter, appliances, and insurance, as well as how to handle consumer issues, problems of consumer law, and fraud, quackery, and deception.

Another significant offering is in the field of health where the State Education Department has produced modules dealing with physical health, mental health, sociological health problems, environmental and community health, education for survival, and the Consumer and His Health Dollar. Such programs, which focus upon the immediate concerns of youth, have the potential to arouse and hold the interest of disaffected students. Such courses might well be part of the instructional material in reading education.

Scheduling adaptations

School administration may need to take a fresh look at traditional scheduling of students. As adults we do not necessarily study a problem for 40 weeks, five periods a day, 45 minutes a period. Rather we complete a unit of work in an hour, a week, a month, a year, or over many years. Perhaps the breaking up of large units of work into easily accomplished smaller units is desirable.

Just as the traditional pattern of one teacher to one classroom is changing with the advent of team teaching, so may the concept of the semester or year course change. Perhaps, too, secondary schools will borrow the concept of the nongraded classroom from the elementary schools and allow students to proceed at their own pace, taking shorter or longer periods of time to complete programs that traditionally have been taught as 1-year courses. Such teaching will require a different approach from that of the typical group presentation, question and answer, recitation type of teaching.

Need for planning together

Most of us would agree that learning to plan for the wise use of our time is a desirable attribute. One of the marks of the intelligent adult is that he foresees events and plans for them.

Part of the school's job is to increase the number of students who can establish meaningful goals and move toward goal accomplishment.

If we agree that it is desirable to learn to plan our lives, then the proper place to learn this desirable skill is in school. We "learn by doing" and learning to plan intelligently is no exception. If schools help these children to plan their work and gradually increase their responsibilities as they prove able to perform them, the end result of the educational process should be a group of self-reliant individuals, skilled in cooperative effort, who will make far better use of their time than is now the case.

Of primary importance in this process is the readiness to learn. We have the responsibility of helping disadvantaged pupils achieve this readiness by having them share to the extent that they are able in selecting their goals for the day, the week, or the year, and their methods of reaching them. Thus they become partners in the program rather than opponents.

The process of planning daily activities with students can and should begin in the first year of school. Such planning should continue each year throughout the school experience, building upon the increasing skill and maturity of the students.

We must learn to enlist the aid of students so that they may share in proposing aims and methods and understand both why the work has value and how to proceed. This job of planning is especially important for the disadvantaged who are not familiar with the type of family planning and discussion of deferred aims more common to advantaged groups.

Steps in planning

One of the most important factors in good planning is being able to substantiate the need to study any particular area -- to answer the student's question, "What's in it for me?" One good test of readiness is a frank discussion of the answer to this question. Skillful teachers know how to draw answers from the more able students which help the less understanding to see values.

Naturally, the teacher must first formulate his own ideas, which, with pupil additions and suggestions, become the day's, week's, month's, or year's plan of work. The teacher of the disadvantaged must be prepared, however, for class rejection of his carefully made plans. The adaptable teacher is able to re-plan with the class, taking advantage of whatever motivational forces may present themselves. Each year should be a period of growth in planning -- with more detailed opportunity for group and individual work, increasing length of unit, and increasing evaluation of work.

All planning should provide an opportunity for each student to experience success in dealing with classroom material. Such planning will reinforce and supplement the learning process by affording a feeling of personal achievement.

Each class with disadvantaged pupils should end with a reflective, "What have we accomplished?" "What needs to be done tomorrow?" "Let us list what we must remember to do this evening or tomorrow." This need not take more than 5 minutes and should be varied in order to keep it worthwhile. It has the virtue of refreshing the students' minds about those worthwhile things they have accomplished and is one way to get the message of what the school is doing back to the home. Such evaluation is an excellent way to establish good home relationships. The age-old question, "What did you learn in school today?" is answered.

Cooperative activity may be difficult to start. The beginnings may be rudimentary and on the simplest plane. Such planning, for instance, might start with room routines. How shall we decorate our bulletin boards? Who will be responsible for making school announcements over the public address system? Who can bring in a job description from a parent's place of work? Are there others who would like to work on this committee? Who will invite the driver-training teacher in to talk about safety? What questions should we have ready to ask him? What do we want to find out?

End results of planning

There is no reason why the planning may not advance in depth and quality until disadvantaged pupils begin to set worthwhile tasks for themselves which occupy longer units of time. They can help to set standards of performance for themselves, accept obligations to share their findings with the class, and exhibit other evidences of mature self-direction. The keys are worthwhile jobs to be done and practice in this technique.

The adult who plans poorly suffers the consequence of his bad decision. Unless the end result is calamitous, pupils should likewise learn that poor planning and poor execution have unhappy consequences and they should profit from that experience. Recently, a pupil was observed who had just lost his part-time job. He was bemoaning the loss of the money he earned. His skillful teacher did not reproach him. Rather he said, "Son, next time you think 3 days before you are fired how much you need that job." The teacher in question rarely said that an opinion expressed by a pupil was wrong. Instead, he drew out other answers from other members of the group until finally all possible courses of action were described. In most cases, the group then agreed upon a much better answer than the erroneous one.

The implications of the process of planning constructive action together are profound. As real experiences of concerted action which bring satisfactions are lived, the qualities of the good citizen and competency of a higher order are developed.

Motivation

The importance of motivation is widely accepted. All good teachers attempt to motivate class work. Sometimes, however, we fail to utilize the motivation already present which the student brings with him to school. Further study of these forces might make our job easier. Reference has been made to some of these built-in motivations: group approval, one's understanding of himself, a philosophy of life, and vocational competency. The teacher's problem is to channel these drives effectively. New motivations must grow out of what the student is -- his drives, his attitudes, his ambitions, his appreciations, and his habits of behavior. Since learning is first based on attention, thought might be given to attention-getting devices. The problem lies in establishing strong enough motives to maintain interest when satisfactions do not arise spontaneously.

For example, isolated spelling words unrelated to the pupil's reading, writing, or other experiences have little interest for such pupils, but a list of the words they have in some way used does have meaning. One effective teacher asks pupils to bring in 20 or 30 words they have encountered on their part-time jobs. The fact that there is considerable duplication points out the tasks common to a number of jobs. Brief drills and tests for mastery follow a study of these words.

The personality of the pupil plays an important part in motivation. The nature of his past experiences, his basic drives, and the effect of the group upon him are factors influencing him in all learning situations. Hence, what creates desire or purpose in one youngster does not touch another. The resourceful teacher studies his pupils in order to discover the best avenues of approach in each case.

APPLYING PSYCHOLOGICAL INSIGHTS IN TEACHING DISADVANTAGED YOUTH

Standards of behavior

The successful teacher of the disadvantaged youth realizes that there are certain rather unique needs and psychological problems in dealing with this type of youngster. The fact that he is a human being makes him respect strength and order and despise the weakling. Therefore, the teacher sets clearly defined limits of behavior. The rules, the boundaries, the routines are clearly known and enforced. It may seem, but need not be, contradictory that the teacher is at the same time friendly, warm, and outgoing in manner. The teacher shows his respect and liking and his belief in children's potential; but he does this not by weakness, but by strength. By establishing standards of behavior, he gives pupils confidence and security through order. The child consciously or unconsciously seeks to grow in power and ability. He knows that without order there is little growth. While he may appear to resent strength, it gives purpose and meaning to his studies.

Punishment of the disadvantaged is ineffective if it is solely directed toward invoking guilt feelings and shame. Rather, the stress should be upon the fact that misbehavior hinders the individual and the group in achieving the goals which he and they are seeking.

Stress should be placed upon the fact that good behavior leads to happiness in school and in life. If punishment is a reflection of the power of the school only, when the power is absent, as it is after school is over, no built-in governor operates to direct the student in constructive ways.

Empathy and understanding may be more important in dealing with the disadvantaged youth than in dealing with others who may be more tolerant and understanding of teacher frailty. With unerring perspicacity, these children see through pretense and half truth. The wise teacher makes few promises; but those he makes, he keeps. Questions are answered without evasion, even though many of them may verge on things offensive to the mores of middle class teachers. Once a climate of trust has been established and the teacher is accepted as a square-shooter, the basis for learning is present.

Role-playing

Role-playing of life situations has meaning. With proper direction and planning, role-playing in the classroom has reality. Not only can it be used to develop better speaking practices, but it can also be related to value judgments. What might you have said if you were the employer? How might you have handled the complaint? How could you have met this situation? One teacher recorded the role-playing scenes on tape and then played back each sentence, pausing between sentences for class discussion.

Positive approach

It may be that we in education have something to learn from the applied psychology of sales. We may need, on occasion, to "sell the sizzle and not the steak." Sometimes we unwittingly antagonize our students and put them in a negative frame of mind. No effective salesman would think of criticizing a customer when he wishes to make a sale. Salesman are carefully coached in the ways of making a favorable impression, building interest, involving the customer in the product, causing him to react positively to it, overcoming his objections, and closing the sale. No doubt the salesman runs into initial resistance comparable to the apathy of some of our disadvantaged students, but he has learned to overcome it.

Active participation

We cannot rely alone on a lecture by the teacher on the merits of the work to be accomplished. Learning by doing implies more than manipulating or listening. Observing and reacting are also "doing." Motion pictures, experiments that involve motor activity, striking pictures which appeal to the emotions, specimens, filmstrips, cartoons, headlines, and the like furnish a motivation by arousing curiosity and provoking discussion. Dramatization and debate --which involve pupils in active participation -- and activities such as making models, painting pictures, taking a poll, running machines, and conducting an experiment --which involve their drives to manipulate, to construct, and to react --all have merit.

Creating desire

Once we have gained their attention, we are ready to move on to the next step of establishing motives. Just as the salesman appeals to the needs and desires of his customer, so the teacher must create desires and purposes in his pupil so that he will recognize values applicable to him and "buy" the idea. Some of these values relate to getting or holding a job; being accepted in a social group; achieving the personal satisfactions and joys that come from learning; gaining social approval or recognition, privileges, and honors; improving school grades; or earning future salary increments.

One class prominently displays the slogan "The more you learn, the more you earn." The teacher, like the salesman, has to devise some plan for getting the values of the activity across to the student. Merely telling the students about such values is seldom successful. Discussion of these values and their importance may create a desire on the part of the students to benefit by them, particularly if the influence of the group can be brought to bear upon the individual.

In motivating for future values, the teacher plays a prime part: if he is respected, his personal approval can carry great weight. Sometimes motivation can be reinforced by bringing into the classroom other people whose positions carry prestige: older honor students, college students, respected community figures -- doctors, clergymen, public officials, artists, mechanics, bakers, clerks, housewives, or sport celebrities.

Rivalry, properly directed, can also be an effective motivational force. Best of all is the rivalry against oneself --the desire to improve in a particular skill and see one's progress prominently displayed on a chart. Class rivalry in fund raising or campaigning and appeals to group pride to put out a successful school newspaper are also valuable in the development of social values.

Building confidence

Perhaps the strongest motivational force of all is praise. There are many indications that one of the major reasons why a pupil leaves school is the feeling that he is not wanted. Often he has been punished more than he has been rewarded. This is not to say that punishment is not needed. If a youngster does something wrong, he deserves and expects to be corrected. It is possible, however, to correct the mistake without upsetting the child. A friendly "I think you have forgotten something" or "Better check your answer again" or "You are making it hard for the rest of us to hear" can accomplish the purpose without hurting the ego of the child. Reject the behavior, if necessary, but not the youngster.

Necessary as it is to correct and sometimes punish, it is still more necessary to praise the disadvantaged child whenever possible. Reassuring a pupil that he is capable, that he can succeed in the task, that he is growing in power is a powerful spur to his improvement. Enthusiasm is contagious, and so is negativism. The teacher who reflects confidence and enthusiasm builds a power in children that permits them to accomplish seeming miracles. Correction can be coupled with the praise, for the child, sensing the commendation, is then eager to rectify the mistakes. "That was good, John. Now let's try to sound the endings a little more clearly."

Dr. Frederick Allen, psychiatric consultant to the Philadelphia schools, suggests as the four essentials for a healthy classroom climate a combination of "the four F's --friendliness, fairness, firmness, fun." The teacher who can successfully establish such a climate will discover that the great majority of the disadvantaged will respond and learn.

GREATER UTILIZATION OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES

"Where the child is the mother's heart lies also."

While the school can make some progress unaided, we feel that a fuller partnership with the community resources, and particularly with the home, could accomplish much more. There are, to be sure, many valid reasons why teachers of the disadvantaged might hesitate to make home visits. In some cases there may be real reason for feelings of fear about going into areas where crimes of violence are not uncommon. There may also be the feeling that parents would resent the intrusion of a stranger into their domicile. Students, too, may be ashamed of their home conditions and thus be reluctant to have their teachers visit their homes. Teachers may feel, and rightly so, that they are already overburdened with large classes, helping pupils after school, clerical duties, homework papers to be corrected, etc., and feel that they have no time for home visits in addition.

Despite these reasons, however, there is much to be gained when the two people most vitally involved in the pupil's progress -- the parent and the classroom teacher -- join forces. If the job is worth doing, perhaps it is possible to find solutions to some of the problems encountered. If the teacher is reluctant to go alone into strange areas because of fear of violence, perhaps two could go together. If there is a fear that parents or children might be ashamed to have school visitors come, perhaps the teacher could try out their feelings by a friendly note asking if it would be convenient to call at an appointed hour. At worst, the parent will decline the invitation, and at best the welcome mat will be out. If class or school loads are too heavy but the administration really feels that this job is worth doing, arrangements can be made to lighten the school duties of teachers of the disadvantaged in order to provide time for this valuable contact.

Often schools feel that their obligation has been discharged if the parent is invited to a school conference or meeting. Unfortunately, while the teacher is secure in the school setting, the parent often is not. Home visits permit meeting the mother and father on their own home ground and provide a firsthand view of the environmental forces at work on the pupil. Parents or guardians cannot help but feel the genuine interest that would prompt a teacher to make this effort. It is probable, due to past experiences with the school, that the parent will be on the defensive at first, wondering what problem has arisen in his son's or daughter's life that would prompt this extreme measure on the part of the teacher. Once this hurdle has been overcome and the parent is assured that only friendship and a desire to cooperate move the visitor, the stage is set for an exchange of views and mutual understanding and respect.

Since many of the problems of the disadvantaged stem from a lack of parental undergirding of the aims of the schools, cooperation between the home and school is extremely important.

It might be argued that home visitation is a job for the trained school counselor, the school social worker, the nurse or some other specialized person. No one will question the need for visits of such specialized, trained people; yet it is doubtful that such visits replace the values of mutual friendship between the classroom teacher and the parent or guardian. Reports of progress, further needs, commendation for improvement--all of these flow freely when no third person is involved.

Once such a basis of friendship has been established, it should be followed up by invitations to visit the school. On such occasions, the teacher or guidance counselor can review the pupil's progress and his future plans.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION ON A BROAD BASE

> The basic concern of the school is with pupils, but for this very reason its concern must extend to home and community. In developing the potentials of disadvantaged children, efforts within the school alone are insufficient. As it strives to overcome children's handicaps--and, indeed, in order to overcome them--it must attempt to modify the home and community environment responsible for cultural disadvantages.[6]

Under terms of a recent directive from HEW, Parental Involvement in Title I ESEA is required. The bulletin, by that name, tells why such Parent Councils are important, what the requirements are for parental involvement, and how to go about setting up a Parent Council.

Once a cooperative working relationship has been established between parents and the schools, all parties may be able to move toward the solution of some of the problems of the home and community which so hamper the youth's progress in school.

Here and there in the country, schools are demonstrating what a concerted effort can accomplish. Neighborhood councils show notable lists of accomplishments. Afterschool study and recreational centers have been established, action has been taken to rehabilitate property and develop family pride, better relationships emphasizing prevention rather than correction have developed with police departments, curriculum enrichment experiences have been made available, free breakfasts and lunches have been provided for needy youth, tutors have volunteered to help disadvantaged students overcome scholastic difficulties, and businesses have contributed modern office equipment and provided jobs for earn-while-you-learn programs.

Community resource people and facilities of an industrial nature can be most helpful in the interpretation of commerce and industry. Visits to industry provide the disadvantaged with a concept of our American technology that can be obtained in no other way. This insight can be extended through the judicious use of industrial personnel in the classroom to interpret their work and the contribution of their firms.

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[6] Shapp, Charles M. *The disadvantaged child: insights & issues.* New York, New York State Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. 1963.

In one community the local university, health department, welfare [illegible] and academies; neighborhood and district organizations; fraternities and sororities; labor unions; trade associations; museums, theaters, and other cultural organizations; "big sister" and "big brother" groups; delinquency prevention agencies; fraternal organizations; boys' clubs; businessmen's group scholarship services; community centers; interracial and civil rights groups; student movements; radio stations; civic associations; libraries; newspapers; industrial organizations; patriotic groups; and political groups.

In addition to remediation programs of the schools in the areas of the disadvantaged, the following supportive services are often found: a specially assigned attendance teacher, several education-vocational guidance counselors, supervisors, a disciplinarian, and grade advisers. Also functioning in certain "special" schools and recommended for consideration are services in psychiatry, psychology, child guidance, family counseling, social work, and tutoring by students from local colleges.

The results of such cooperation are encouraging, particularly for the disadvantaged. Parents take a greater interest in their schools; pupils are given opportunities hitherto denied them; businesses become interested and involved in the work of the schools; and neighborhoods become better places in which to live. Pupils become involved in community activities and have a real identification with events and problems in their environment. They grow in effective citizenship through talking to resource people, becoming involved in cleanup campaigns, and exploring the history, geography, and civic background of the area. Through such activities it may be possible to modify the home and community environment as recommended by the Educational Policies Commission. In any case the education of the disadvantaged will be improved and our children's children will have a greater chance in life as they grow up in better environments.

A FINAL THOUGHT

When maturity is reached and students look back over their school careers, the school they remember most happily and the teachers they remember as the best instructors are the ones which required the highest standards of performance and conduct and presented challenges that lifted them above and beyond what they imagined their own capabilities to be.

A CHECKLIST FOR POSITIVE ACTION

What they want to know and do?
What criteria must be met if the program is to succeed?
What practices have shown promise?
What bilingual education is, how it can be effective, its limitations?
How pupils learn?
How to use career planning as a key to motivation?
How to use the discovery approach?
How to identify and use more realistic curricula?
How to plan with students?
How to use psychological insights effectively?
How to involve parents?
How to utilize community resources?